

# **Global Peace Education in 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

by

**Tohid Moradi Sheykhjan**  
**Ph.D. Scholar in Education**  
**University of Kerala**

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**Tohid Moradi Sheykhjan**

Ph.D. Scholar in Education,

University of Kerala

Email: tohid294m@gmail.com

## **Abstract**

*This article explores theoretical and practical issues related to education for global peace during the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The development of global peace education is discussed in this study. Although India has made many contributions to the theory and practice of peace work (the non-violent movement led by Mahatma Gandhi, who conceived peace as non-violence restored with justice and equity. By non-violent action Gandhi meant peaceful, constructive mass action. It is true that Gandhi did not write on global peace education in any very specific way, but his whole philosophy and life have been, of course, important in peace studies and peace education not only for India but for other nations of the world as well. His peace education must become part of all global education system.*

**Keywords:** *Global, Peace, Education.*

## **Introduction**

In modern world, advances and changes experienced in social, political, and economic domains cannot be effective in diminishing the unwanted behaviors displayed by individuals in a society. This underpins the need for creating a peace culture based on equality, justice, democracy, human rights, tolerance, and solidarity in a society. Schools are undoubtedly the starting point for social change. Schools and teachers can help make this change through peace education. Peace is generally perceived as weak, passive, boring, and dull (Mathews, 2002).

## **Peace Education in Twenty First Century**

During the 21<sup>st</sup> century there was a growth in social concern about horrific forms of violence, like ecocide, genocide, modern warfare, ethnic hatred, racism, sexual abuse, domestic violence, and a corresponding growth in the field of peace education where educators from early child care to adult use their professional skills to warn fellow citizens about imminent dangers and advise them about paths to peace.

Peace education is currently considered to be both a philosophy and a process involving skills, including listening, reflection, problem-solving, cooperation and conflict resolution. The

process involves empowering with the skills, attitudes and knowledge to create a safe world and build a sustainable environment. The philosophy teaches nonviolence, love, compassion and reverence for all life. Peace education confronts indirectly the forms of violence that dominate society by teaching about its causes and providing knowledge of alternatives. (Harris & Morrison, 2003, p. 9) peace education is generally being carried out at the beginning of the twenty-first century human rights education, environmental education, international education, conflict resolution education, and development education.

### **Peace Education as Defined through the Literature**

As with the global education movement (most researchers agree peace education has become a part of global education), current school-based peace education encompasses a wide variety of aims and approaches, depending on the audience and socio-political and ideological context. And like global education, too, peace education overlaps and shares theoretical and practical ground with other types of “progressive educations” (Toh & Cawagas, V. F., 2000, p. 368). These include development education, environmental, human rights, and multi-cultural education. Hicks (1988) notes that peace education shares a concern of contemporary problems with global education as the basis of its content and a belief in participatory and active learning strategies (see also Perkins, 2002). Hicks (1988) also distinguish between negative and positive peace, as well as direct and indirect (structural) violence (Galtung, 1975). Peace education has been identified as sharing common ground with citizenship education through beliefs in the interdependency of the world’s citizens (Harris, 2002; Toh & Cawagas, V. F., 2000), and through its faith in tolerance, respect for difference, and an appreciation of the rights of others as productive of peace (Mahrouse, 2006). Peace societies for much of the past century have depended on education to alert young and old, men and women, to the international structures and systemic inequities that encourage militarism and discourage peaceful solutions. Peace education was understood to be furthered through international cooperation, and by a pedagogy that emphasized active global citizenship. Central to this pedagogy are (a) values clarification and values analysis (Reardon, 1996), (b) critical thinking strategies to uncover assumptions rooted in racism, patriarchy, and post colonialist structures, (c) the development of an ethic of caring for others, the environment, and structures supporting justice (Toh & Floresca- Cawagas, 2000), and (d) skills associated directly with conflict management and resolution (Harris & Morrison, 2003). Despite its promising history as a separate area of study, however, by the 1970s

peace education was been incorporated into the broader rubric of global education (Hanvey, 1975), to which the article now turns.

### **Impact of Global Peace Education**

Peace education, as a discipline, is difficult to delineate. It encompasses the studying of the processes that lead to either conflict or peaceful coexistence and the development of values, attitudes, and skills for peace building, with the ultimate goal of ending violence and leading to societal change towards peace (Harris 1988, p. 17). International education, global education, and multicultural education are linked to peace education and involve many different topics, such as education about diverse cultures, the study of relationships between nations, international law, foreign affairs, distribution of power and resources, colonialism, causes of wars between nations, disarmament education, and the economics of the arms race. These subject areas all flow into a curriculum designed to inform about and analyze the many factors that either give rise to, or prevent, conflicts and violence. Such a curriculum might draw on disciplines as diverse as biology and world languages. In one college, for example, the peace education program draws on supporting courses in nine different departments (Juniata College, 2002). Learning about factors related to violence and peace would not guarantee internalization of peace-building values. Studying other cultures may lead to an appreciation and love for the diversity of existing cultures, but can also remain in the realm of information gathering and regurgitating. For peace education to accomplish societal change attitude and value formation need to be considered and skills for consensus building and conflict resolution learned. Multicultural education, non-violence education, human rights education, world-citizenship education, and violence-free conflict resolution feed into the values building aspect of peace education. Multicultural education, in the sense of becoming aware of one's own and societal prejudices and one's stereotyping; and then learning strategies to admit and overcome those prejudices, is applicable here.

Non-violence education, also called Gandhian studies, which promotes the power of peace and nonviolence, is a factor in attitude formation. Found in religious thought, voiced and implemented by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, non-violence education intends to inculcate in students the insight that resorting to violence is not a choice that they need to reject the notion of violence as being natural and inevitable. Creating a culture of positive peace is stressed (Harris, 1999, p.305/6). Human rights education, with learners accepting universal human rights as

common values for humanity and as a basis for action, is considered to support building a culture of peace. Human rights education has lately been stressed in a number of Latin American countries emerging or still suffering from serious human rights violations and civil unrest (Rodriguez, 2000). Developing a larger loyalty than one's own nation, that is, a sense of world citizenship, with insights into the interdependence of the nation states, acceptance of diverse population group as one humanity, as expressed in the principle of "unity in diversity," would be the outcome of international and multicultural education when integrated into one's value system. It would be a citizenship education that is multilayered, developing concern and activity at local, national, and global levels (Lynch, 1992, p. 2). Acquiring the skills for consensus building, violence-free conflict resolution, and cross-cultural communication gives learners going through the process of peace education the tools necessary to express their values and attitudes in actions. Programs such as Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways (RIPP) for example, focus on social and cognitive skill building for non-violent conflict resolution and positive communication (Greenberg, Domitrovich, Bumbarger. 2001, p. 8). There are more than sixty such programs in the United States with varied approaches to skill building for various age levels and purposes (see Florida Department of Education 2002). This brief survey of the many facets of peace education illustrates its complexity and the challenge of compacting and structuring it into curricula, learning modules, and training courses. Keeping this in mind, we will explore the diffusion of peace education.

### **Development of Global Peace Education by Mahatma Gandhi**

Although India has contributed enormously to world peace through the adoption of the policy of 'Panchsheel' and 'non-alignment, and not disregarding the great non-violent movement led by Mahatma Gandhi and the long historical tradition of 'Shanti' (Peace) and Ahimsa (Non-Violence) is not either in the form of discipline or in the form of educational institutions in India. This means that there is almost no mention of courses in peace education in the syllabus of schools and universities in India, either before or after independence, though peace activities had been started long before India's independence, and are still continuing with the help and efforts of Gandhians and neo-Gandhians following the principles of non-violence advocated by Mahatma Gandhi, who conceived peace as non-violence restored with justice and equity. By non-violent action Gandhi meant peaceful, constructive mass action. It is true that Gandhi did not write on peace education in any very specific way, but his whole philosophy and life have been,

of course, important in peace studies and peace education not only for India but for other nations of the world as well. Gandhi was not given the Nobel Peace Prize, perhaps because peace has been so poorly understood. The word "peace" is officially used with such contradictory meanings that acts of war and preparation for war are easily passed off in its name. Gandhi's relevance to the peace process went unnoticed to many during his lifetime. It is only recently that violence, rather than war, has come to be recognized as the opposite of peace. This recognition is as yet confined largely to scholarly circles gradually acknowledging that peace is a comprehensive process involving the uplift of human consciousness and the building of a truly human community at all levels. When this is widely understood the world will recognize that Gandhi did more for peace than any other person in living memory. In fact, the essence of Gandhi's work was peace, and he did more than raise a general desire for it: he also laid the groundwork for a specific peacekeeping institution, the 'Shanti Sena' (Peace Army), which 40 years later was very effective in containing the Chinese incursion into Tibet as well as in other conflicts.

Gandhi's conceptual pioneering on a spiritual view of the universe and constant testing could have great promise for peace education. Gandhi made at least four contributions to individual peace work which seems highly relevant for peace education programmes, not only in India but all over the world:

1. A principled or ethical emphasis on the link between means and ends that guided his whole life.
2. Constant testing of beliefs by his own actions.
3. The steady growth or transformation from personal views to wider world view of peace.
4. The constant use of publicity as to motives and actions. (Herman, 1994.)

Lawson (1989) observes that it is with Gandhi that the link between peace and social justice is so dramatically shown, and it was this connection that was to make education for peace a contentious issue in years to come. Peace education in India has been greatly influenced by Gandhi's ideas. This was why, in the beginning, in some selected universities of India and in the Institutes of Gandhian Studies, peace education and peace studies have been introduced in the discipline of Gandhian Studies and Non-Violence. So we have to give a good stress upon the thoughts of Gandhi and Gandhian peace education must become part of all global education system.

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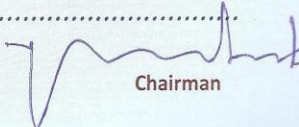
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